Renewing Rural
Prince Edward Island

Discussion Paper

April 2009

Prince Edward Island
CANADA

Fisheries, Aquaculture
and Rural Development

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Foreword from Minister Neil LeClair

On behalf of the Government of Prince Edward Island, I am pleased to present this discussion paper, Renewing Rural Prince Edward Island.

Over the coming months, we ask Islanders to share in the creation of a Rural Development Strategy that responds to the distinctive needs and fulfills the potential of all regions of rural Prince Edward Island. There are challenges – but there are also major opportunities for a better future.

This paper is intended to serve as a starting point for those discussions. Over the coming months, the views of Islanders will be gathered through a range of meetings, discussions, and other forms of input. By bringing together the latest and best information on trends and issues with the insights and wisdom of rural Islanders, I am confident that we can find ways to better achieve the vision set out in this paper:

A prosperous, vibrant and healthy rural Prince Edward Island, able to adapt to a changing world and to offer diverse opportunities and quality of life to all its citizens.

Neil LeClair, *Minister*
Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development

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Introduction

In April 2008, the Prince Edward Island Speech from the Throne announced a new Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Rural Development. The department is to develop a new rural economic development strategy, and to bring a rural, small-community focus to government policy development. Its mandate is to provide leadership in developing new approaches to rural community development, service delivery, and employment programs.

Designing a rural economic development strategy is a complex and challenging task. Like jurisdictions elsewhere, Prince Edward Island's rural communities are in the midst of a time of major changes on every front – demographic, technological, economic, and social. In response to these forces of change, a wide range of policy initiatives and measures are already in progress in various sectors.

Strong potential exists to gain even greater benefit from those measures through a strategy that integrates them to maximize their impact and to ensure that Prince Edward Island not just reacts to but anticipates and benefits from change. The purpose of this discussion paper is to provide an initial information base to support the process of strategy development. The next phase will see wide-ranging consultations and discussions to gain the views and advice of Islanders, especially rural Islanders.

The paper opens with the history of rural development in Prince Edward Island. Next, the concept of 'rural' is defined, and three rural zones are proposed, in the west, centre, and eastern regions of PEI outside the greater Charlottetown and Summerside areas. A statistical profile of rural Prince Edward Island and a comparison of the three regions to each other and to the province's more urbanized areas is then provided. Next, examples are noted of initiatives to strengthen the rural voice in government, maximize access and opportunity, optimize resources, enhance service delivery, and invest in learning.

A vision for the future is proposed, founded on three key themes: sharing leadership; finding a balance between existing strengths, needs and new opportunities; and responding to the distinct needs and opportunities of each region. To achieve shared leadership, a new delivery model is proposed with new structures and supports within government, in the three rural regions, and between the two levels. The paper concludes by describing the key components which will make up the Rural Development Strategy, and setting out a process and time frame over the coming months to work with rural Islanders to develop that strategy.

Rural Development: History

Prince Edward Island has always been an overwhelmingly rural province. At the beginning of the 20th century, more than 85 percent of the 103,259 people living on the Island were rural residents. They were largely engaged in farming and fishing, along with local manufacturing, in what has been described as a largely semi-subsistence agrarian economy. By the middle of the 20th century, little had changed. Geographer A.H. Clark, in **Three Centuries and the Island,** described the makeup of the population in this way. Of the Island's some 100,000 people, "Almost half of them were farming people, and their farms occupied more than 75 percent of its two thousand odd square miles. Three-fourths of the people lived outside of the two main towns...Those productive workers who were neither farmers nor engaged in providing services to farmers were chiefly concerned with the fishery."

However, the period following the Second World War (described by Island historian David Weale as "the break") brought profound and fundamental changes to the province. Improved transportation, communications and the adoption of rural electrification brought new amenities and services to rural Islanders. At the same time, the steady modernization of the economy resulted in a clash of lifestyles and aspirations. This introduced a jarring note to the pastoral symphony, as the old order was being undermined and eroded. Between 1951 and 1971, the number of farms would drop by more than 50 percent. The number of rural residents as a percentage of the total population would drop to 60 percent by 1971. As the province entered the 21st century, the percentage of rural residents would further decline to 55 percent.

These trends have been a source of concern for many years. As the number of farms declined and their size increased, many rural Islanders who would have remained on or close to the land were forced to leave their rural communities, or the province itself, in pursuit of opportunities elsewhere. One of the staunchest defenders of the rural way of life on the Island was former premier Walter Jones. While lauding the prospects of Island agriculture, even he was forced to admit that many Islanders continued to join the exodus to other parts of Canada or the United States. Nevertheless, he remained adamant about the need to protect and defend the interests of rural Prince Edward Island. In an address to the Maritime Board of Trade, he outlined the importance of maintaining the predominance of rural communities. "The heart of the province was in its agricultural districts and cities were only a place that people can meet and do their business," he said. "If the farmers all go foolish like the people in the towns, good-bye Prince Edward Island."

Jones' truculent defence of rural values resonated strongly, especially with rural Islanders concerned about their future. As rural areas continued their decline, the demand increased for measures to protect rural communities. A prevailing political and societal consensus

developed that the health and well-being of rural Prince Edward Island was vital to the health and well-being of the province itself. As rural Prince Edward Island goes, went the sentiment, so goes the Island itself.

Prince Edward Island was not immune to the sweeping demographic, economic, social and cultural changes taking place throughout North America in the post-war period. The Island's largest industry, agriculture, experienced the loss of a farm a day. Fearing for their destiny, and the fact that they were losing control over their future, a number of rural Islanders and community leaders established the Rural Development Council in the mid-1960s to address the growing challenges facing rural communities. The RDC advocated changes in government policies affecting the primary industries, and established 'community schools' to bring rural residents together to discuss their problems and prospects.

The establishment of the Comprehensive Development Plan in 1969 brought with it the prospect of revitalizing the Island's moribund economy and stagnant society. Agriculture would be the province's economic engine. Ambitious efforts were announced to rationalize the fishery, expand the tourism industry, promote economic diversification, modernize the educational system and provide much-needed infrastructure to sustain and stimulate economic growth. The overall aim of the Development Plan was to enable the province "to guide and take full advantage of opportunities provided by the rapidly changing social and economic environment of Canada and the world at large." The Development Plan was ambitious and far-reaching; it would help kick-start the province into the 20th century.

In order to ensure that Islanders could participate in the economic and social programs offered under the Development Plan, the Rural Development Council was contracted by the provincial government to implement the public participation program. The RDC engaged a number of community development workers across the province to work with communities to identify opportunities and ensure their active participation in the various programs under the Development Plan. In addition, the Leadership Institute was established to help prepare community leaders to take a more active leadership role.

Internal conflict and confusion about the role the RDC was expected to play in the implementation of the Development Plan, as well as differences over the approach it was taking, eventually led to the cancellation of the contract between RDC and the government. However, the 1970s signaled the beginning of a new era of community activism in the province.

During the 1970s, the province was undergoing a major transformation. Many provisions of the Development Plan were controversial. While many Islanders welcomed the increasing modernization of the province, many did not. By the end of the decade, Islanders elected a government with a platform based on a 'rural renaissance' that promised a return to a simpler way of life.

The Development Plan was the first of a series of federal-provincial agreements aimed at the development of the provincial economy. Between 1984 and 1990, the Canada/Prince Edward Island Economic and Regional Development Agreement restructured the development process, with more coordination of efforts between both levels of government. The agreement sought explicitly to achieve balanced economic growth across the province. Under the slogan, "Blending Tradition and Innovation," its aim was to take advantage of opportunities arising from a changing economic environment while preserving the Island's traditional lifestyle.

However, the rhetoric did not always correspond to the reality. Although some sectors such as aquaculture provided new opportunities, overall the number of farms continued to decline, rural areas continued to lose population and services and amenities continued to disappear. According to a number of socio-economic indicators, including educational attainment, income and employment, rural Islanders continued to fall behind.

In 1990, in order to better focus on local needs, the provincial government announced a strategy that proposed it play a supportive role in rural development initiatives. Local development organizations would be given a key role in initiating and taking responsibility for rural development projects. The strategy espoused grass-roots solutions, and encouraged local communities to take charge of their development.

In 1994, the provincial government announced a new economic development strategy which again emphasized the role that local communities could play in economic development. Existing community economic development organizations were encouraged to become more self-reliant.

In order to give community development organizations more capability, under the Canada/Prince Edward Island Agreement on Industrial Development in 1995, four regional development agencies were established with cost-sharing between the federal and provincial governments. When the agreement expired in 2001, the provincial government did not renew its share of the funding. Since that time, they have relied on more limited federal funding for their ongoing operations.

Instead, the provincial government, elected in 1996 with a renewed commitment to rural economic and social development, established the Community Development Bureau. The bureau would operate with community development officers in various areas of the

province. The bureau was characterized as a community/government partnership that "will be able to capitalize on the ideas and strengths within each individual community by helping citizens to identify the improvements that will bring long-term sustainability to the area." Local communities would be encouraged to develop practical projects that served local needs and that would be operated by the community.

Throughout the latter half of the 20st century, and continuing until the present time, provincial governments have consistently affirmed their commitment to rural Prince Edward Island. Investments made in agriculture and forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, and processing industries, construction and maintenance of roads and other infrastructure, efforts to promote new businesses in rural areas, encouraging the growth and spread of tourism and maintaining and strengthening public services and facilities throughout the province have reflected the goals of successive governments to meet the needs of rural residents. Despite these efforts, and the apparent commitment with which they are expressed, the challenges facing rural Prince Edward Island remain.

Over the years, the records of successive provincial governments in rural development have been mixed. There is no doubt that many of the overall initiatives of governments have benefitted rural communities as well as urban centres. All too often, however, rural areas have been peripheral to government's efforts to ensure that the provincial economy remains competitive with the rest of Canada, and indeed the world. What has been generally absent from government policies and programs are explicit efforts to ensure balanced growth throughout the province.

In the Speech from the Throne in the fall of 2008, the provincial government announced that, in order to further strengthen smaller rural communities, it would undertake the formulation of a new rural economic development strategy. The aim of the strategy is to help bring a rural, small-community focus to overall government policy development. This is perhaps the first time that rural development has been undertaken in the context of government policy as a whole.

Defining Rural Prince Edward Island

In undertaking a rural development strategy, a critical first step is to define what is meant by rural. This question was easy to answer in the past described above, in a time when urban and rural communities were more distinct and self-contained. "Rural" meant all areas of Prince Edward Island that lay outside the boundaries of cities or large towns. These areas were generally characterized by lower population density and an economy based on primary industries.

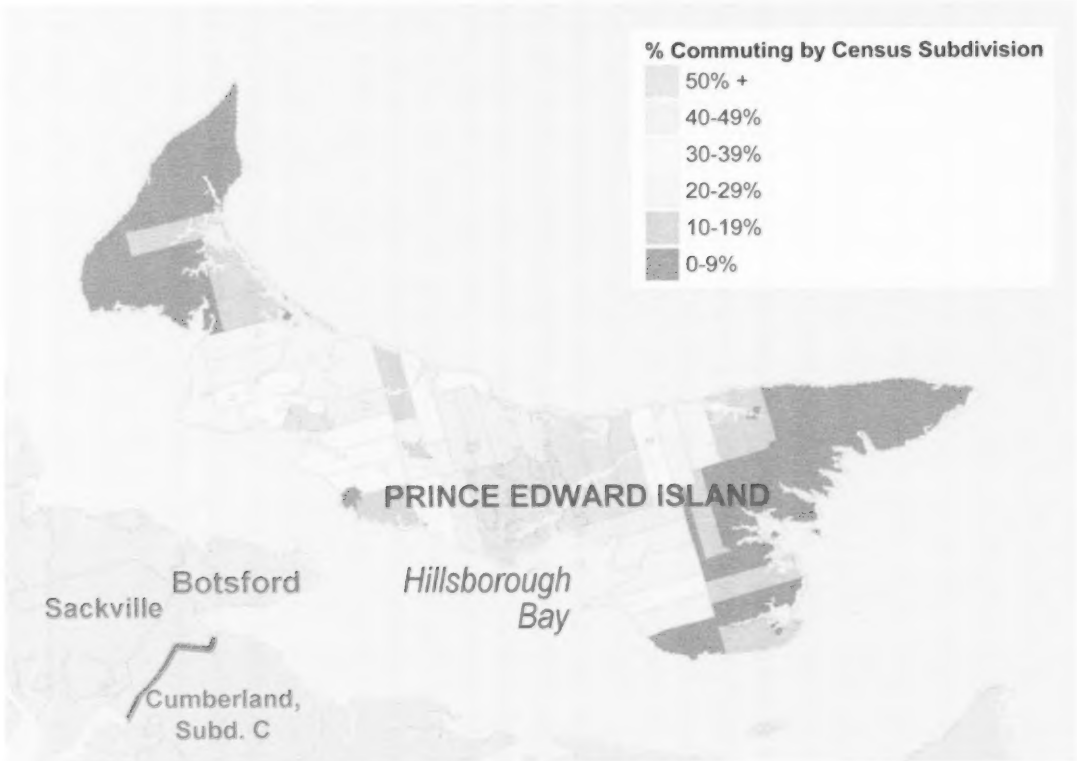
Today – as cities extend out into the countryside, rural dwellers commute to work in town, and farmers make up an ever-shrinking fraction of the population – these distinctions have become blurred. Reflecting this, formal definitions of rural have shifted from a simple population density basis to take into account the degree of integration between 'rural' areas and their adjacent urban centres.

Statistics Canada now categorizes small to medium-sized urbanized areas such as those found in Prince Edward Island as 'Census Agglomerations,' or CAs. Those CAs consist of an urban core of at least 10,000 people, and a surrounding area in which at least half the population works in the urban core. Prince Edward Island has two CAs – a large CA in and around Charlottetown totalling almost 60,000 people, and a much smaller CA in and around Summerside of about 16,000 people. These urban areas have many advantages, including their central location, their concentration of amenities and services, and their higher proportion of public sector employment. A stronger, more vibrant rural Prince Edward Island is essential to the future of both centres – especially Summerside given its important role as a service centre for all Prince County.

The areas outside the urban CA zones are classified by Statistics Canada as 'Rural and Small Town.' These are further divided into zones of urban influence, based on the percentage of population commuting to work in urban centres. Since people tend to also shop and enjoy leisure in the centres where they work, commuting has been shown to be a very effective indicator of the overall extent of urban integration. These definitions are the approach considered most useful by Statistics Canada for issues such as economic development, labour market analysis, and design of catchment areas for public services.

Commuting patterns in Prince Edward Island are shown in Map 1 below. Fifty-four percent of Prince Edward Island's population lives in areas where at least half of the labour force works in the two urban centres. Another 13 percent live in areas where 30-50 percent of the labour force works in the cities, and 14 percent live in areas where 10-29 percent of the labour force works in the cities. Only 19 percent live in areas where less than one-tenth of the labour force works in Charlottetown or Summerside.

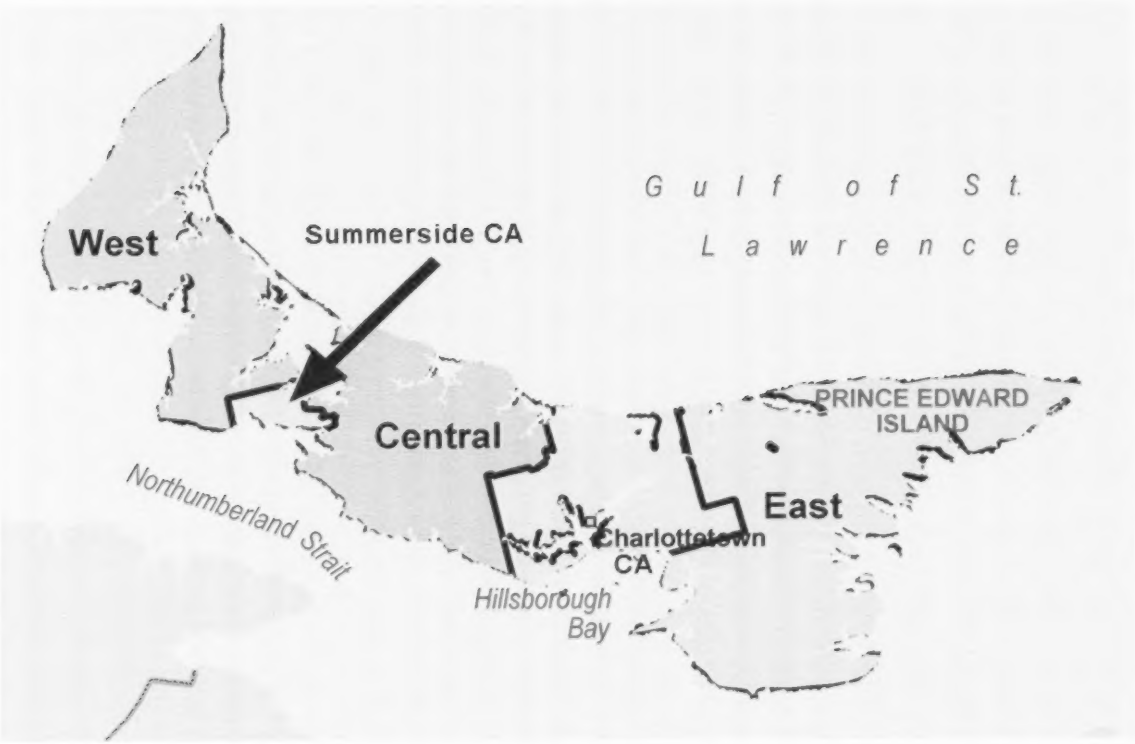
Commuting Map



To be effective, the rural development strategy must be based on geographic zones which allow for the informed use of data and evidence from Statistics Canada and other sources – but those zones must also make sense in terms of the historical, administrative, political, and social realities of Prince Edward Island. The approach must recognize that the economic circumstances and prospects of Prince Edward Island's regions vary significantly and require different measures.

To achieve this, three rural zones have been defined for analysis and discussion. As shown in Map 2 below, they are the area west of the Summerside CA (Rural West), the area between the Summerside and Charlottetown CAs (Rural Centre), and the area east of the Charlottetown CA (Rural East).

Zone Map



As the analysis in the following section will show, the rural east and rural west are similar in many respects, and significantly more disadvantaged than the rural centre on most indicators. Within this context, the rural west faces even greater challenges than the rural east, especially in its most remote areas. The Rural Development Strategy will aim to address the challenges and build on the distinct strengths and opportunities in each region.

The Status of Rural Prince Edward Island: Key Indicators

Overview

National research by the Rural Secretariat suggests that significant gaps and disparities exist between Canada's most rural areas and the rural areas closer to urban areas – and that those gaps widened on many fronts during the decade from 1991 to 2001. The following analysis, using recently available 2006 Census data, indicates that these patterns and trends largely hold for Prince Edward Island as well. On all indicators, the rural west fares the worst and the rural east is similar to but less disadvantaged than the rural west. On many indicators, the rural centre is more similar to the urban areas than to the rural west and east.

- From 1991 to 2006, Prince Edward Island's rural west and rural east each lost three percent of their population, while the rural centre and urban areas grew by eight percent and nine percent respectively.
- As a result, the rural west and rural east's combined share of Prince Edward Island's population dropped from 33 percent in 1991 to 31 percent in 2001, continuing a long-standing trend of declining population share.
- The most rural areas had a higher proportion of children and seniors than the rural centre and the urban areas, and a correspondingly lower share of working age population, due in part to out-migration of working age people.
- Fewer than 40% of the population aged 25-64 in the rural west held a post-secondary credential, compared to 63% of the population in the urban areas. The urban share of population with a university degree was almost triple that of the rural west and almost double that of the rural east.
- Conversely, the share of population aged 25-64 with less than a high school diploma was 24 percent in the rural areas compared to 14 percent in the urban CA s. The share in the rural west was highest, at 32 percent, followed by the rural east at 23 percent and the rural centre at 18 percent.
- The share of population with full-time full-year employment ranged from a low of 31 percent in the rural west to a high of 51 percent in the urban areas.
- The employment rate, or share of the population aged 15 and over working, ranged from a low of less than 56 percent in the rural west to 62 percent in the urban areas.

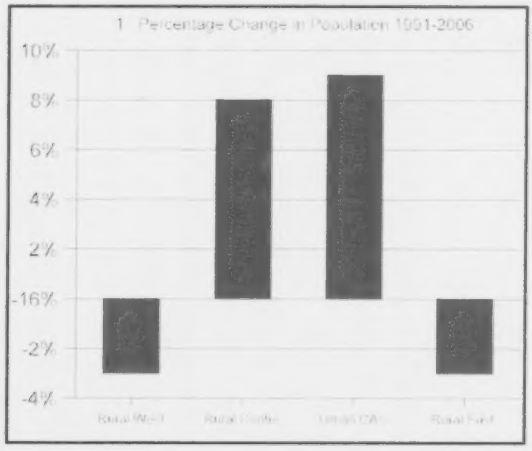
- Youth out-migration is a significant concern for rural Prince Edward Island. Only 14-15 percent of the working age population in the rural areas was aged 20-29, compared to 19 percent in the urban areas.
- Goods-producing industries (agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, forestry, processing, and construction) accounted for about 45 percent of jobs in the rural west and east, compared to 18 percent in the urban areas. Meanwhile, industries mostly in the public sector (health, education, and public administration), accounted for one job out of five in the rural areas and one out of three in the urban areas. The rural centre fell between these extremes.
- Occupations in the management and professional skill types account for only 11 percent of jobs in the rural west and 25 percent in the urban areas. Occupations requiring only a high school diploma or less, meanwhile, range from a high of 58 percent in the rural west to a low of 47 percent in the urban areas. Again, the rural east and centre fell between these extremes.
- Primary and processing occupations account for over one-third of employment in the rural west and east, versus less than one-tenth in the urban areas. Occupations in largely professional and technical types (health, education, scientific services, arts and recreation), on the other hand, ranged from 14 percent of jobs in the rural west to 28 percent in the urban areas.
- Average incomes showed less disparity than many other indicators, ranging from a low of just over $19,000 in the rural west and east to a high of just over $21,000 in the urban areas.
- This relatively small variation in average incomes is largely due to government income transfers (Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, OAS/GIS, child tax benefit, social assistance), which ranged from a high of 25 percent of total income in the rural west and 22 percent in the rural east, to a low of 13 percent in the urban areas.

The Rural Development Strategy will aim to change those trends. It will seek to maintain rural Prince Edward Island's existing areas of strength, build on those where untapped potential exists, and seek out and develop new opportunities. It will do this by fostering a common sense of purpose and direction, and by creating structures and mechanisms for shared leadership and coordination both inside government and in the rural areas. Those measures will increase the impact and benefit of government's wide-ranging investments in rural Prince Edward Island, In so doing, the Strategy will harness the potential and capacity of Prince Edward Island's rural regions to define the future they want and to work towards achieving that future.

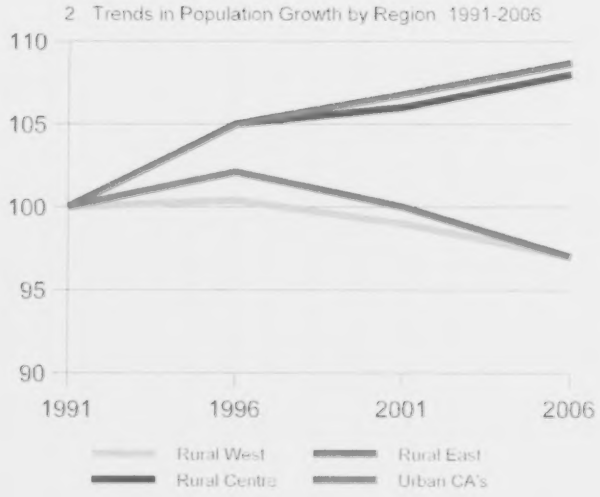
To support these goals, further research and analysis will be done to explore the indicators summarized here, identify other key trends, and analyze the factors causing those trends. Based on this work, detailed profiles will be developed of each region to support the design of the rural development strategy over the coming months, and the subsequent development of regional plans.

Population Patterns and Trends

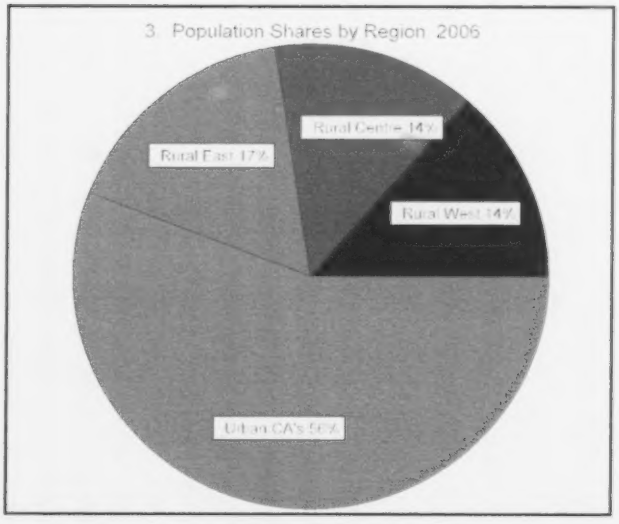
Population Growth and Decline As shown in Charts 1 and 2, population trends have differed sharply in the rural east and west compared to central Prince Edward Island. Over the fifteen years from 1991 to 2006, both the rural west and the rural east saw a population decline of three percent. In the rural centre, meanwhile, the population increased by eight percent, and in the urbanized areas, population increased by nine percent.



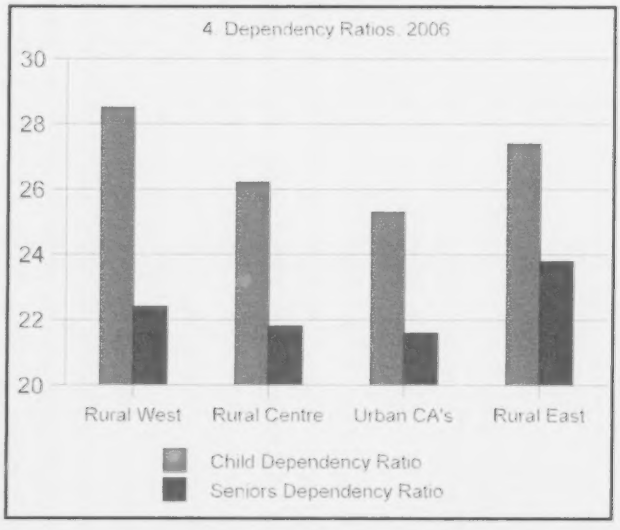
As indicated in Chart 2, population trends over time were very similar in urban and central Prince Edward Island, with significant growth in the first half of the 1990s and slower but steady growth since then. In the rural west and east, meanwhile, population increased very slightly from 1991 to 1996, and declined throughout the decade from 1996 to 2006.



Population Shares As a result of these trends, central and urban Prince Edward Island's share of population is growing while the rural western and eastern share is shrinking. Population shares in 2006 are shown in Chart 3. Compared to 1991, the urban areas' share of population increased from 53 percent to 55 percent, while the central rural area maintained its share of 14 percent and the rural west and east declined from a combined total of 33 percent to 31 percent.



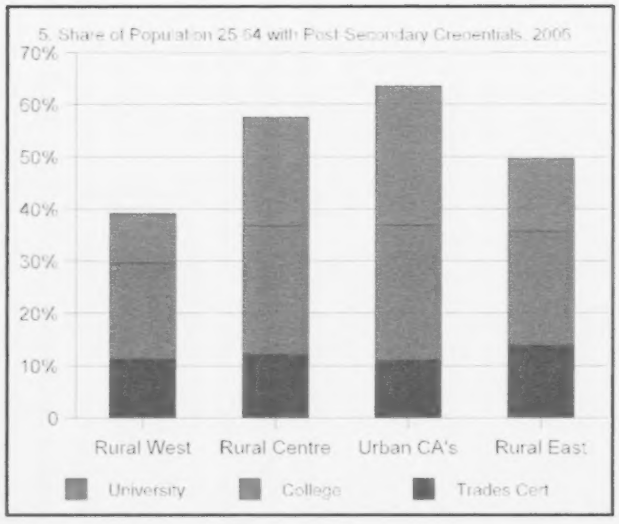
Age Structure of the Population The dependency ratio is a measure commonly used to express the proportion of children and seniors to working age population. The ratio indicates the number of children or seniors for every 100 people of working age. Dependency ratios for 2006 are shown in Chart 4, indicating that both the rural west and the rural east have a higher proportion of children and seniors than the central and urban areas. The rural west has a particularly high proportion of children, while the rural east has a higher proportion of seniors. Taking the two measures together, both the rural east and the rural west have a combined dependency ratio of 51 seniors and children for every hundred people aged 15-64, compared to 48 in the rural centre and 47 in the urban areas.



Education and Skills

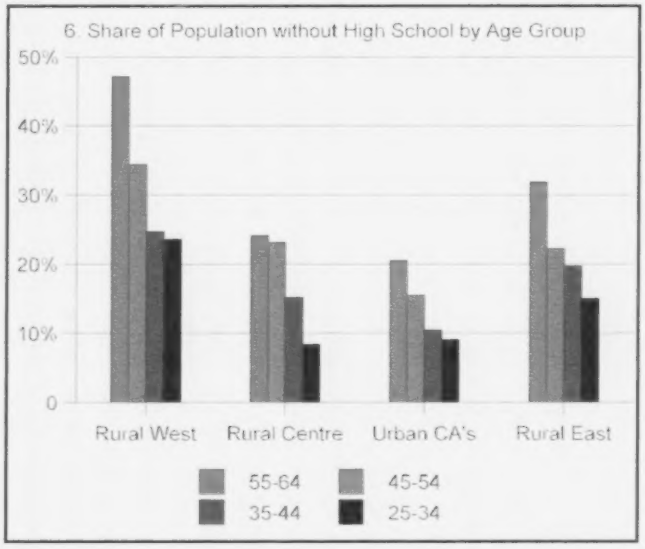
The educational attainment levels of a population reflect the availability and affordability of post-secondary education, the skill demands of the local labour market, and the resulting patterns of in- and out-migration. The impact of those factors can be seen in the very different levels of educational attainment across Prince Edward Island.

Chart 5 shows the share of population aged 25 to 64 in each region holding post-secondary credentials. Fewer than 40 percent of the population aged 25 to 64 in the rural west held a post-secondary credential in 2006, compared to 42 percent in the rural east, 57 percent in the rural centre, and 63 percent in the urban areas. The share of population with a trades credential is fairly consistent, ranging from 11 percent in the rural west to 14 percent in the rural east. Greater disparity exists with regard to college credentials, and particularly in the area of university credentials, with the 27 percent share in the urban areas almost triple that of the 9.5 percent share in the rural west and almost double the 14 percent share in the rural east.



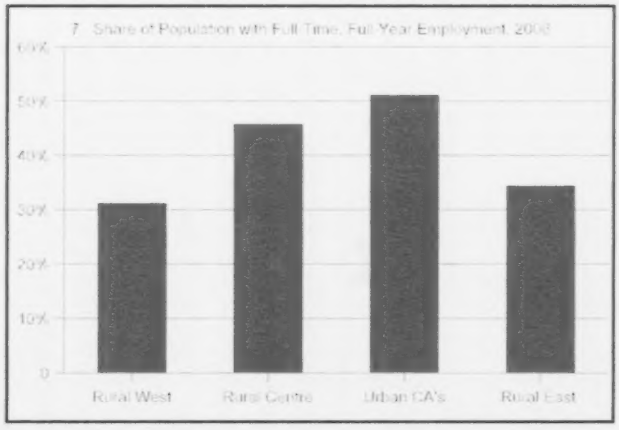
The above pattern results in part from the lack of demand for advanced credentials in the rural labour market. In all areas of Prince Edward Island, however, the skill demands of the labour market have been rising steadily for many years. Fewer and fewer jobs exist for people without a high school diploma. While the skill levels of the population have risen steadily, a substantial share of Prince Edward Island's adult population continues to hold less than a high school diploma. These Islanders face an increasingly uncertain future. Meanwhile, employers may experience difficulty finding the skilled workers they need to compete and to grow their businesses.

Chart 6 shows the share of population of prime working age without high school, by age group in 2006. As indicated, this share varies substantially both across regions and across age groups. While the proportion drops in the younger age groups in all regions, the share stays stubbornly high in rural west, and, to a lesser extent, in the rural east. In contrast, the rural centre has the greatest improvement across age groups, posting the best outcomes of any region.

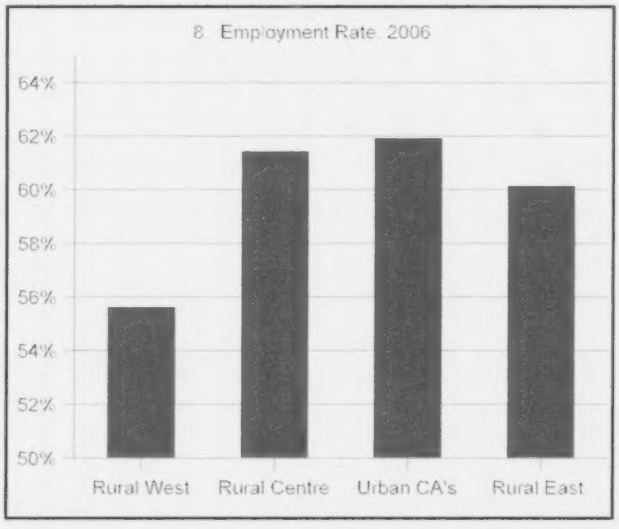


Labour Market Activity

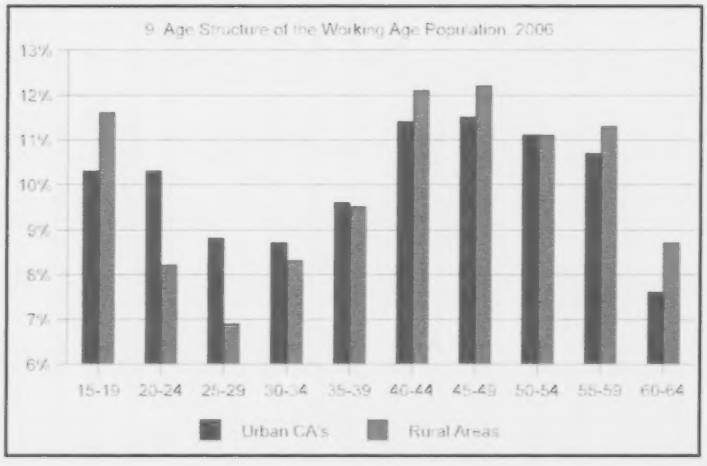
Economic and employment conditions vary significantly across Prince Edward Island. As discussed more fully below, the dominant industries in rural areas are more seasonal than those in the urban areas. The resulting regional differences in the share of population aged 15 and over with full-time, full-year employment are shown in Chart 7. The rate ranges from a low of 31 percent in the rural west to a high of 51 percent in the urban areas.



The employment rate, or share of the population aged 15 and over that is employed, is a useful broad measure of labour market activity. It captures both the labour market supply side, via the participation rate, and labour market demand side, re the number of jobs. As shown in Chart 8, the employment rate is significantly lower in the rural west, at 55 percent, than in other parts of the province. This reflects a lower share of population aged 15-64, a lower participation rate, more seasonality, and higher unemployment.



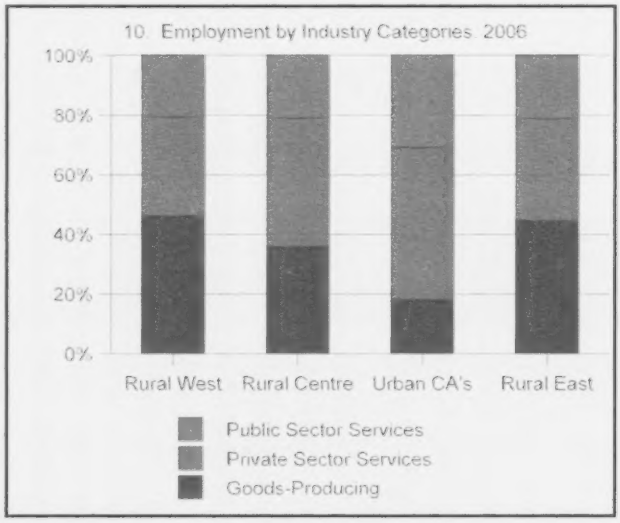
An area of longstanding concern to rural areas has been the out-migration of youth. Chart 9 indicates that there are substantial rural-urban differences in the age structure of the working age population. The rural areas have a much lower proportion of workers aged 20-29, ranging from 14 percent in the rural centre to 16 percent in the rural west, than



do the urban CAs at 19 percent. Conversely, the rural areas have a higher share of working age population in all age brackets 35 and over than do the urban areas.

Industry Sectors

Industry structure has a major influence on the other factors discussed in this section. There are major rural-urban and regional differences in the distribution of industry sectors across Prince Edward Island. Chart 10 clusters those into three categories:



- Goods-producing: agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, forestry, construction, utilities, manufacturing and processing
- Private sector service industries: trade, transportation, food and accommodation, finance, insurance and real estate, information, arts and recreation, scientific services and personal services
- Primarily public sector services: health, education, and public administration.

Goods-producing industries account for well over 40 percent of all employment in the rural west and east, and 36 percent in the rural centre, compared to less than 20 percent in the urban areas.

Private sector service industries account for one-third of jobs in the rural east and west, compared to over half in the urban areas. Again, the rural centre falls midway between these extremes.

The public sector accounts for just over one-fifth of jobs in each of the three rural areas, and almost one-third in the urban areas.

Occupational Distribution

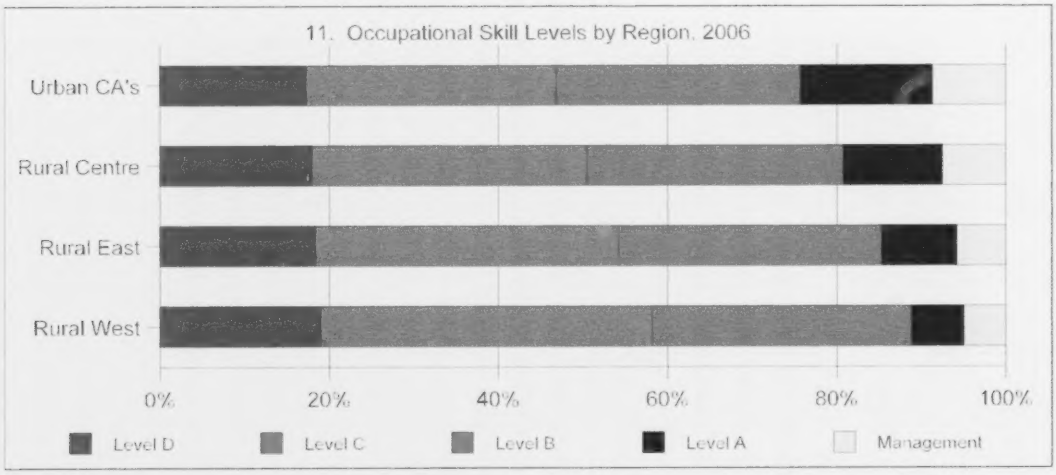
Reflecting these differing economic structures, the distribution of occupations varies substantially across Prince Edward Island. These can be summarized in terms of skill level and skill type.

Occupational Skill Level Under the National Occupational Classification system, there are five categories of skills. It should be noted that these categories refer to the skill level of the job, not the individual holding the job:

- Management, which varies in its formal educational requirements
- Level A, professional occupations usually requiring a university degree
- Level B, technical occupations usually requiring a college diploma or trades certificate
- Level C, various occupations usually requiring a high school diploma and/or occupation-specific formal training
- Level D, occupations not requiring credentials and usually providing required skills through on-the-job training.

As implied by the preceding sections on education, labour market activity, and industry, the skill levels of occupations show very different patterns in rural and urban areas of Prince Edward Island. As indicated in Chart 11, two categories of skill level are similar across all regions of the province:

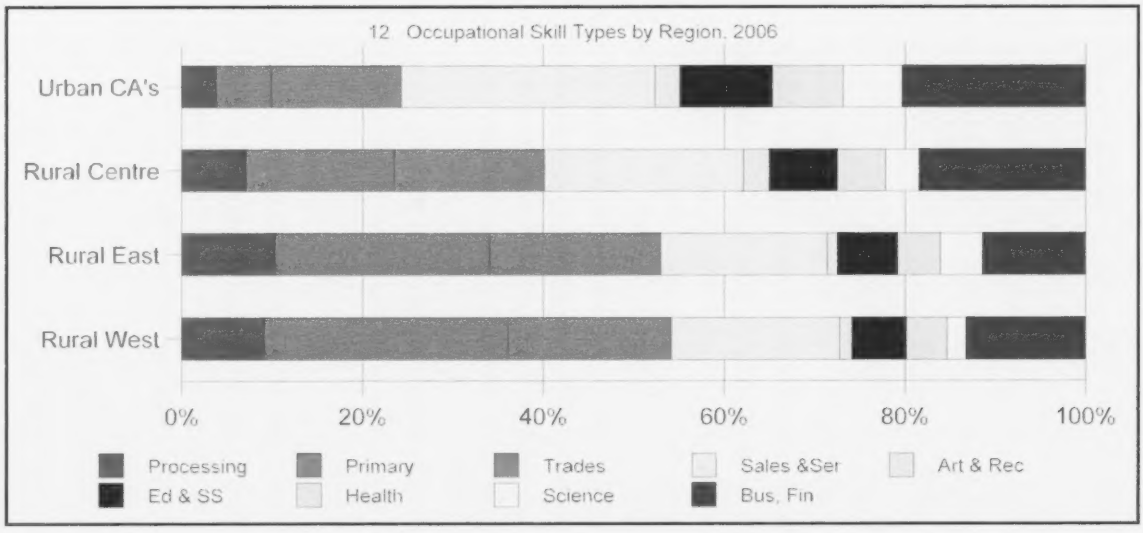
- The share of Level D or lowest-skilled occupations is relatively consistent across all regions, ranging from a low of 16 percent in the urban areas to a high of 19 percent in the rural west.
- The share of Level B occupations, requiring college or trades-level technical skills, is also very similar across the province, ranging from a low of 29 percent in the urban areas to a high of 31 percent in the rural east.



The other categories show substantial regional differences:

- Level C occupations, requiring high school, are most common in the rural west and east, accounting for 39 percent of occupations in the rural west and 36 percent in the rural east – compared to 33 percent in the rural centre and 30 percent in the urban areas.
- The reverse pattern holds for management and Level A (professional) occupations. The highest share of these, combined, is 25 percent in the urban areas, and the lowest shares are in the rural west, at 11 percent, and the rural east, at 15 percent. The rural centre is in the midrange, at 19 percent.

Occupational Skill Type The NOC system identifies nine categories of skill types. The distribution of those also differs substantially across Prince Edward Island's regions. As shown in Chart 12, the primary and processing skill types dominate the rural west and east, accounting for over one-third of occupations in those regions. In contrast, these categories account for less than one-tenth of occupations in the urban areas. The level of trades and transport occupations is fairly similar in all regions. Sales and service occupations play a larger role in the rural centre and the urban areas than in the rural west and east. The remaining occupations, with a high proportion of professional and technical jobs, make up almost half of all occupations in the urban areas, compared to just over one-quarter in the rural east and west. Here too, the rural centre is midway between these extremes.

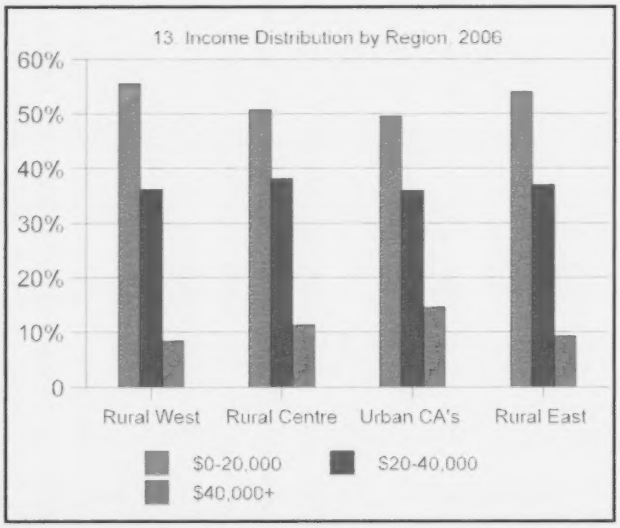


Income

All of the factors described above, in combination, have major impacts on the level and nature of opportunities available to individuals in rural Prince Edward Island. One measure of this is income – its average level, its distribution in the population, and its sources.

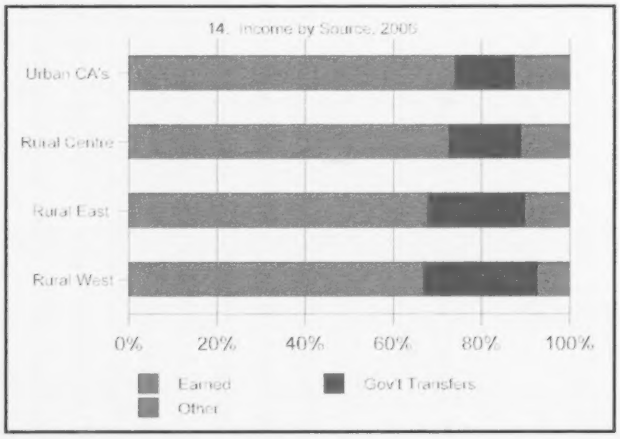
Average incomes are relatively similar across Prince Edward Island, ranging from a low of just over $19,000 in the rural west and east to a high of just over $21,000 in the urban areas.

Income Distribution However, this average masks differences in the distribution of income across the population. As shown in Chart 13, a higher share of the rural population has incomes below the provincial average, ranging from a high of 56 percent in the rural west to a low of 49 percent in the urban areas. The share of population with incomes in the $20,000-$40,000 range is fairly consistent across the province at 36-38 percent. The share of population with incomes over $40,000 or more than double the provincial average is



much higher in the urban areas, at 15 percent, than in the rural west and east, at eight to nine percent.

Income Source Government transfers play a vital role in equalizing incomes across Prince Edward Island's regions.



As indicated in Chart 14, in the rural west and east, earned income (wages and salaries, net farm income, and self-employment income) accounts for 68-69 percent of total income, compared to 73-74 percent of income in the rural centre and the urban areas.

The most rural areas also have a much lower level of 'other' income than the rural centre and the urban areas, ranging from a low of seven percent in the rural west to 13 percent in the urban areas. The 'other' category includes dividends, interest, other investment income, and retirement pensions and can be seen as an indicator of wealth and assets.

The income gap in the rural areas is filled by government transfers such as Canada Pension Plan, OAS/GIS, the child tax benefit, and Employment Insurance. These transfers account for over 25 percent of income in the rural west and 22 percent in the rural east, compared to a low of 13 percent in the urban areas. These differences reflect a combination of factors, with the rural areas having a higher proportion of children and seniors, a higher proportion of low and moderate income families, and higher unemployment rates.

Conclusion

These indicators clearly show that there are significant differences between Prince Edward Island's rural areas and its urban areas. They also indicate, however, that in many areas there are differences almost as large between the rural east and west versus the rural centre. Furthermore, in the area of population, the gap is widening, as the rural west and east lose population while the rural centre and urban areas grow. In another key area, education, all regions are making gains. However, in some areas, such as reducing the share of population without high school, the rural west and east are not progressing as quickly as the urban areas and the urban centre, and hence the gap in this area is also widening. These are the trends that the Rural Development Strategy will work to change for the better.

Current Government Initiatives for Rural Prince Edward Island

The development of a rural development strategy is an important event that will lead to an increasingly targeted, systematic and cooperative approach to tackling the challenges facing rural Prince Edward Island. But it is essential to note that the strategy will build on a strong foundation of initiatives and policy development that has been enacted since June of 2007.

As the strategy enters the public consultation phase, it is important to note that rural development activity – including the numerous, wide-ranging initiatives listed below – will continue to be undertaken in a coherent, progressive fashion.

These policies and initiatives range from partnering to develop a long-term vision for our agricultural sector to assessing the fundamental issues of land use and local governance, and from government decentralization to the opening up the world of e-business to all Island residents through the development of a province-wide rural broadband.

The Rural Development Strategy will work to maximize the benefit to rural Prince Edward Island from the many initiatives being implemented across the province.

Strengthening the Rural Voice: Access to, and Participation in, Policy Development and Governance

One challenge that all rural areas face is a sense of isolation from the focus of decision-makers and from the development of policies that impact upon them.

Whether this isolation is real or perceived, it cannot be doubted that it is an element of the rural-urban dynamic on Prince Edward Island. It also cannot be doubted that government's capacity to deliver services, and to represent the interests of all Islanders, is enriched by providing the opportunity for residents from all regions of Prince Edward Island to be involved in the public discourse, and to serve in the provincial public service while living in their home community.

Addressing the imbalances – and depolarizing the relationship – between governments, regions and communities through access to the resources of government: information, finances, and human resource scale and capacity, is an essential step to strengthen the whole of Island society.

"One Island Community, One Island Future" is about giving all Islanders a voice in the future of our province. Some examples of the provincial government's measures toward this goal include:

- The ***decentralization of the departments*** of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development, and Education and Early Childhood Development will ensure that the voice and experience of Islanders from across Prince Edward Island are heard in the public service.
- The appointment of the ***Commission on Land Use and Local Governance*** will ensure that the voice of Islanders is heard in developing approaches to fundamental issues of governance and land use to meet the challenges of the future.
- The ***Prince Edward Island Community Accounts*** initiative will give communities access to data and statistics about their communities, enabling them to develop strategies to strengthen and grow. Knowledge is power – and making this information available to our communities will empower them.
- Enhanced ***watershed management funding*** will allow watershed groups to carry on and expand their important leadership work in our rural communities by breaking down traditional borders, mediating challenges between industry, residents and the environment.
- The ***Office of Public Engagement*** is developing new approaches to increase and to more consistently gather public input into the governing process.

Maximizing Opportunity: Access to Markets and the World

Many rural communities and residents are disadvantaged – in relative terms – due to location. The elimination of this disadvantage, by providing rapid access to markets through large infrastructure investments, is a classic role for provincial and federal governments. Improved infrastructure has a further benefit – it also enables Islanders to stay in their communities while enjoying the level of local services and standard of living that they expect and deserve.

A century ago, the railway provided access to all Islanders, and in the post-war period, rural electrification provided opportunity and quality of life to rural Prince Edward Island. In recent decades, highway upgrades embodied government's commitment to provide access to opportunity to all Islanders, and improving our highways remains an on-going priority. Now, the information highway is playing an increasingly important role, enabling Islanders to work, to access markets and to communicate regardless of where they live on Prince Edward Island. For rural Islanders today and in the future, the expansion of the information highway is fundamental to their future opportunities.

The provincial government is working on a number of fronts to provide rural Prince Edward Island with greater access to markets and the world:

- The Island-wide ***Rural Broadband Initiative*** is providing access to global markets for Island products, connecting all Islanders to the world on an equal basis and enabling business to be conducted anywhere from rural Prince Edward Island.
- The ***Five-Year Capital Budget*** will invest $500 million over the next five years to expand, upgrade, and modernize public infrastructure across Prince Edward Island, providing the high quality services and access to opportunities which allow communities to grow and which improve the quality of life for rural Islanders.
- ***Strategic investments in Route 2*** , the main transportation route for rural Prince Edward Island, include road re-capping with a primary industry focus – putting priority on improving the roads that are most important to rural industries such as agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, and tourism.
- The ***Prince Edward Island Grain Elevators Renewal Process*** will maximize the contribution of those facilities to a strong, competitive, high value agricultural sector.

Optimizing Resources: Planning for People and Place

To prosper, Prince Edward Island must reap optimal benefits from finite resources: our land, our waters and our population. To achieve this goal in a way which meets the needs of rural Prince Edward Island while sustaining those resources, the provincial government has developed a wide series of policy documents and policies:

- The provincial economic development strategy, ***Island Prosperity: A Focus for Change*** , sets out a framework for investment in people, innovation and economic infrastructure.
    - Two major infrastructure initiatives - the Accelerated Rural Broadband Strategy and the Renewable Energy Infrastructure (The 10-Point Plan) – are exclusively rural investments.
    - The Bioscience Sector Strategy will enable diversification opportunities for agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture.
    - The Aerospace Sector Strategy and the e-Health Centre will further enhance Summerside as an employment centre, which has tremendous benefits for stabilizing rural communities throughout western and central Prince Edward Island.
- ***Island Wind Energy: The 10-Point Plan*** lays out the ground rules under which 500 megawatts of wind energy will be developed on Prince Edward Island. The plan requires developers to demonstrate community support, and to ensure that the rural Islanders receive the maximum benefit from this emerging resource.

- The ***Provincial Energy Strategy*** aims to increase our energy self-sufficiency by reducing our energy consumption and by developing energy supply from our own sources – benefiting rural Prince Edward Island through greater diversification of agriculture and more value from our forests.
- The ***Alternate Land Use Services*** initiative is providing financial incentives for farmers to go beyond required minimums to protect the environment for the benefit of all Islanders.
- The ***Commission on Nitrates in Groundwater*** , like ALUS, seeks to plan the way forward for a safe, high quality water resource.
- The ***Low-Interest Loan Program*** is providing support to fishers in areas LFA 25 and 26A to help them address challenges of declines in the level and value of their catches.
- The ***Lobster Roundtable*** is bringing fishers, processors and government to the table to develop improved lines of communication and promote strength across the industry.
- The ***Prince Edward Island Heritage Study*** provides a basis for development of our key rural resources of heritage and culture.
- The ***Commission on the Future of Agriculture and Agri-Food*** has brought farmers, retailers and government to the table to craft a collective vision for the future of agriculture on Prince Edward Island – optimizing returns to farmers and building a prosperous and healthy rural Prince Edward Island.
- Rural broadband will enable all regions to grow their tourism product, assisted by the ***Innovative Tourism Solution*** – providing all tourism accommodation businesses, large and small, with access to a single integrated, online tourism bookings system.
- The ***Buy PEI Initiative*** and the development of a new ***Culinary Tourism Strategy*** (including support for events such as Fall Flavours) are examples of new initiatives that market both our products and our communities.
- The promotion and development of our ***Festivals and Events*** , as well the rural ***Coastal Drives*** , are encouraging visitors to spread out across Prince Edward Island for the benefit of our rural communities and businesses.
- The ***Regional Development Support Program*** is enabling communities to participate in community-based economic development and public infrastructure projects. This funding often leverages a greater amount of support from federal sources.
- The ***Island Community Fund*** is providing funding support to projects related to community safety and security.

Stabilizing Service Delivery: Access to the World Class Health Care and Education for all Islanders

When surveyed, health and education are consistently the priorities of Islanders. Small hospitals and small schools continue to be prominent and contentious policy issues. Expectations related to health and education services are set high and Islanders, regardless of where they live, deserve the highest quality of both.

- The ***Corpus Sanchez Report on Prince Edward Island's health care system*** sets out proposals for an integrated health care system for Prince Edward Island to provide safer, more stable and higher quality services for all Islanders. Shifting the emphasis of health care from bricks and mortar to improved service delivery will be a significant step in enabling government to maintain services across the Island.
- Since coming to power, investments in the ***quality of our education system*** – to the benefit of all Islanders – have been a priority of government. Measures to fulfill this priority include bringing kindergarten into the school system, supporting common assessments of learning outcomes, establishing the George Coles Bursary, increasing support for post-secondary institutions, and developing and testing community-based adult education models. These initiatives demonstrate a commitment to improving the performance of our education system from kindergarten through post-secondary levels, as well as lifelong learning.

Islanders First: Investing in People

Adult education is a pillar of economic development. The co-op movement on Prince Edward Island taught us the value of investing in our own people, studying our own strengths, challenges and opportunities and bringing people together to tackle those challenges.

As illustrated above, levels of education attainment in the working age population, particularly among younger workers, present a challenge for some of our rural areas. Without a purposeful approach to addressing this challenge, opportunities for growth and development will be unnecessarily limited, both for those individuals and their families, and for their communities.

- The devolution of ***the Labour Market Development Agreement and the Labour Market Agreement*** will allow Islanders to apply a more strategic focus to developing our greatest resource, our people.
- Government is in the early stages of developing ***Regional Human Resource Development Councils*** that will allow regions to work along with the Province to strategically develop local human resources and to target development that matches

the skills and strengths of the local population. This knowledge will also enable more targeted population strategies which can be used to promote immigration to our rural communities.

- ***A Community Adult Education Pilot*** is being developed by the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning and tested in Souris, after which it will be refined and offered across Prince Edward Island.
- The ***Rural Jobs Initiative*** is providing rural businesses with one-time grants for incremental hiring in order to facilitate expansion and new product development. This program also enables skilled young people to get established with businesses in Prince Edward Island, which can help the province to retain our best and brightest.

These represent a cross-section of the many measures already in progress to develop rural Prince Edward Island and serve its citizens. They are already bringing major benefits across the province. The Rural Development Strategy will bring these together for maximum impact, identify areas where measures could be better coordinated or strengthened, and propose new measures to fill any gaps or emerging needs and opportunities.

Vision and Key Themes

A prosperous, vibrant and healthy rural Prince Edward Island, able to adapt to a changing world and to offer diverse opportunities and quality of life to all its citizens.

The rural development strategy will be founded on several key themes: shared leadership, a balanced approach, and responsiveness.

Shared Leadership

Within government, all departments contribute to the well-being of rural Prince Edward Island, and all departments are responsible to work together to ensure that those actions achieve the fullest possible benefit.

In rural Prince Edward Island, communities must share in leadership of their regions to define and move towards the future they want.

Governments and rural regions must work together to apply the resources of government to the needs and priorities of rural Prince Edward Island.

This discussion paper proposes new structures to enable shared leadership – within government, within rural regions, and linking government and rural Prince Edward Island – both to create the rural development strategy, and to implement it.

A Balanced Approach

Rural Prince Edward Island's heritage and culture are at the heart of our provincial identity, and the rural economy generates much of our wealth as a society. It is vital to retain the best of what we have, and, where possible, to build on those strengths.

At the same time, the strategy must enable rural Prince Edward Island to overcome the challenges and barriers which create disparities and inequities, or which reduce opportunity and quality of life for its citizens. The strategy must foster and facilitate change, innovation, and adaptation where it can lead to a better future for all.

The process of strategy development will give a voice to rural Islanders in defining what to hold, what to build and what to change.

Responsiveness

Each rural region within Prince Edward Island has its distinct strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

In every region, priorities and approaches will vary to best meet the needs, build on the strengths, and seize the opportunities in that region.

As well, the Rural Development Strategy will recognize that some rural areas face greater challenges and higher barriers to opportunity than other regions. To overcome those structural disadvantages, development measures must be broader and deeper than in more advantaged regions.

This responsiveness is essential if the Strategy is to contribute to the overall goal of One Island Community – One Island Future.

The Strategy must recognize and respond to the differences among regions. Only then will it have its maximum impact in support of the vision set out above.

To achieve this, the process of strategy development will combine research findings with the insights and knowledge of rural Islanders to determine how best each region of Prince Edward Island can develop to its fullest potential.

Building on Prince Edward Island's Rural Development Experience

To achieve the vision set out above, government must assess and update its structures and approaches to rural development and redesign and renew its delivery model. Stakeholders want action; however, for effective action, it is important that government knows its values, that it has goals and a vision, and that it has taken action to get its own house in order so that it can best deliver that results that stakeholders need and demand.

Current Approach

The Community Development Bureau has been the Province of Prince Edward Island's primary instrument for community and rural development since the fall of 1999. The Bureau consists of Ministers from four departments that are active in the delivery of services in our communities, as well as two Members of the Legislative Assembly. The exclusive role of the Bureau has been to review and approve grants to projects via the Regional Development Support Program.

The staff complement of the Community Development Bureau consists of a bureau chief and six community development officers. The community development officers work within individual communities to help citizens to identify the improvements that will bring long-term sustainability to their areas, develop those ideas into projects, and navigate the maze of potential support programs. As well, the Community Development Bureau's Regional Development Support Program provides critical 'gap' funding that can enable community projects to proceed.

This local development approach is essentially a 'bottom-up,' common-sense approach to development.

This approach has strengths. It allows individual communities to identify immediate community development priorities. These priorities are often intuitive, practical solutions to local issues and challenges. Usually, these priorities are popular within the individual communities and reflect a local consensus regarding a particular issue, opportunity or challenge. As well, this approach can foster local leadership – an inherent strength of the "bottom-up" development approach.

But this approach as currently practiced on PEI has weaknesses. The Community Development Bureau and the projects that it champions are not guided by a long-term strategic plan for the province or for the regions. The Province of Prince Edward Island has not developed a rural development strategy since 1990.

The diffuse nature of local governance on Prince Edward Island intensifies the challenge presented by the absence of provincial and regional plans. Communities often operate without access to resources – policy information, development staff and financial resources. If these resources are not being provided by the central administration, then communities are forced to adopt 'best-guess' solutions. Lack of resources and capacity in communities and regions leads to greater dependence on the provincial government, its policies, priorities and decisions. While these solutions often work in the short term, they may not be the optimal long-term solution for the challenges facing rural communities. Short-term solutions cannot alter the path that rural communities have been on for the past four decades or more. In recognition of this challenge, the model described below harnesses regional cooperation and the knowledge and skills of stakeholders within those regions.

The absence of a central administrative system for rural development – enabling the establishment of long-term strategic objectives and the strategic deployment of central resources – is a key weakness of the Community Development Bureau model. This is one obvious place to improve our process.

A second weakness of the current approach is that rural development is a 'whole of government' issue – not a responsibility that can be assigned to a single line department. The Community Development Bureau includes representation from departments active in the delivery of services in rural Prince Edward Island; however, it has never been used as a policy forum to aggregate and disseminate information, provide policy direction and apply resources in a cohesive fashion to address the challenges facing rural Prince Edward Island.

A central administrative component to the Government of Prince Edward Island's approach to rural development is essential to meet the ongoing challenges facing our rural industries, communities, and regions.

A properly functioning central administrative system will provide long-term strategic direction and guidance, and channel resources (information, professional assistance and financial) to the regions. The central administrative system may also make independent investments, consistent with the objectives of the Strategy, to address challenges and disadvantages in rural Prince Edward Island.

A Renewed Approach to Integrated Rural Development

In recognition of the strengths and weakness of Government's approach to rural development, the Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development is proposing to reorganize its rural development resources to better integrate government's approach to rural development.

It is proposed that the new structures within government and in the community would consist of six integrated elements.

Inter-Ministerial Rural Development Bureau

The Community Development Bureau would be restructured to include the Ministers of all departments that impact upon economic and community development in rural Prince Edward Island. Chaired by the Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development, the renewed Bureau would include the Ministers of:

- Tourism
- Agriculture
- Environment, Energy and Forestry
- Communities, Cultural Affairs and Labour
- Innovation and Advanced Learning

The primary activity of the Bureau would be to debate, aggregate, integrate, and disseminate rural development policy objectives throughout government. The group would monitor the implementation of the rural development strategy and ensure that its objectives and goals are met.

Rural Development Secretariat

The Bureau would be supported by a Rural Development Secretariat consisting of a director, a senior rural development officer and a policy analyst/planner. The Secretariat would also support the development and implementation of strategic development plans in the three new rural development zones, through a dedicated rural development officer in each of the three zones.

Deputy Ministers' Council Working Group

A Deputy Ministers' Council Working Group on Rural Development would be struck, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Rural Development, with representation from all government departments.

The Working Group would work on targeted initiatives in integrate rural development policy across government.

Inter-Departmental Rural Development Offices

The Inter-Ministerial Rural Development Bureau would establish inter-departmental Rural Development Offices in each of the three rural development zones. These offices would be permanent clusters, each with a core staff of a rural development officer from the Rural Development Secretariat, a business development officer from the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning, and the staff of the new Human Resource Development organization in the region. These staff will be supplemented by the regular presence of staff from other departments represented on the Bureau.

The Deputy Ministers' Council Working Group on Rural Development would guide the formation and operation of the inter-departmental Rural Development Offices. Reports from the Working Group regarding the effective implementation and operation of the offices would be forwarded regularly to the Inter-Ministerial Rural Development Bureau.

Where possible, the offices will be established in close proximity with federal government sponsored regional economic development organizations and community business development corporations in order to enable increased partnership and cohesion with rural development stakeholders across Prince Edward Island.

Rural Economic Development Advisory Council

The Minister of Rural Development will create a Rural Economic Development Advisory Council, with regional representation and representatives from key rural industry sectors. While the strategy is being prepared, they will be asked to meet monthly with the Minister to provide advice related to the process of strategy development. Following the completion of the strategy, the Council will meet quarterly, to exchange information regarding the progress of the strategy and to share ideas and on-going lessons learned from the integrated rural development process.

Regional Development Councils

Following the completion of the strategy, three Regional Development Councils would be established, with representation from business leaders, non-governmental organizations, and municipal, provincial and federal governments. These councils will be responsible to develop commonly-structured strategic plans for their region which align with the long-term strategic objectives and vision established in the provincial rural development strategy, as well as other key policy initiatives established locally and by the provincial and federal governments. The three strategic plans would be prepared November 2009 – March 2010.

Over the long term, an evergreen process will be established, to ensure that the strategy is self-renewing and that its goals and objectives remain focussed and up-to-date. Once the Regional Development Councils are in place, they would play a central role in this process – ensuring a strong regional voice in the province's long-term approach to rural development.

The Way Ahead

Key Components of the Provincial Rural Development Strategy

Through a shared process of strategy development, outlined below, government will work with rural Islanders to design a provincial Rural Development Strategy to maximize the benefit of current measures and to identify additional measures to develop the Island's rural regions to their fullest potential. The final document will contain measures and approaches that address the following goals:

- Clear alignment of rural development strategies, goals and accountability measures with current provincial government policies and initiatives that are pertinent to the development of rural Prince Edward Island
- A refined vision, drawing on the advice and views of Islanders expressed during the public consultations
- An expanded situation analysis, clear justification and articulation of provincial priorities
- A comprehensive section on new and re-focussed provincial rural development measures, including baseline data, targets, a financing plan and an evaluation process to measure the success of the overall strategy, as well as projects funded through the strategy
- A section that explores existing, new and innovative approaches to financing for region-based rural development initiatives
- A road map for on-going public and regional involvement in guiding rural development policies and approaches

Strategy Timeline and Process

The Rural Development Strategy will be designed through the following processes of public engagement and research:

- At the Conference on Renewing Rural Prince Edward Island on April 16, the Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Rural Development will outline the provincial vision, broad objectives and policy approach.
- During May and June, public consultations will be held, including meetings in at least six locations across Prince Edward Island. Other channels will also be provided for public input throughout the process, including email and online comment forms.
- In July and August, the draft Strategy will be prepared, including further research as required, and targeted follow-up consultations.

- In early September, the draft strategy will be released for public review and comment.
- In early November, the provincial Rural Development Strategy will be made public.
- During November 2009 to March 2010, regional development structures will be put in place and regional strategic plans will be prepared, aligning the priorities and approaches of region-based stakeholder groups and linking them to the provincial Rural Development Strategy.

These processes are intended to ensure that Islanders participate as fully as possible in setting the directions, determining the approaches, and defining the structures to develop rural Prince Edward Island to the fullest of its potential and to achieve the vision proposed in this paper:

A prosperous, vibrant and healthy rural Prince Edward Island, able to adapt to a changing world and to offer diverse opportunities and quality of life to all its citizens.

APPENDIX 1

Literature Review

In addition to extensive research into Prince Edward Island's rural development past – beginning with the co-op movement until present day initiatives – the following documents and initiatives were reviewed, analyzed and considered. Many aspects, including terminology, processes and policy concepts, are reflected in the policy approach undertaken in this discussion paper. Full references will be provided in the published version of the provincial rural development strategy.

County and City Development Boards

http://audgen.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=505&CatID=5&StartDate=1+January+2004
http://www.cdb.ie/index1.htm
http://www.cdb.ie/pdf/taskfrcdocs/Taskpercent20Forcepercent20Report.pdf
http://www.cdb.ie/pdf/taskfrcdocs/Indecon_Report_CDBs-FINAL.pdf
http://www.galway.ie/en/Services/CommunityEnterpriseEconomicDevelopment/CountyDevelopmentBoard/
http://www.pobail.ie/en/
http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/

European Union Rural Development Plans

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/countries/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leaderplus/index_en.htm

Gusztáv Nemes

http://www.policy.hu/nemes/Recentpercent20Publications.html

Wisconsin Rural Leadership Development Program

http://www.uwex.edu/ces/wrlp/
http://www.wirural.org/strategicplan

Rural Secretariat – Government of Canada

http://www.agr.gc.ca/policy/rural/rsmenue.html

Senate of Canada

http://www.parl.gc.ca/39/2/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/agri-e/rep-e/rep09jun08-e.pdf
http://www.parl.gc.ca/39/2/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/agri-e/press-e/17jun08-e.htm

Canadian Provinces
http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/
http://www.enterprisesaskatchewan.ca/adx/aspx/adxGetMedia.aspx?DocID=360

White House Rural Agenda
http://www.whitehouse.gov/agenda/rural/

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